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CHAMPAGNE GOSSIP.

It has been said that if it were not for the wines, the country of Champagne would be the poorest province in France. There is doubtless some exaggeration here; for even the chalk hills of the Marne Valley are not so intractable as the basaltic and scoriaceous mountains of Auvergne and the wildernesses of the Lozère. But for the sake of emphasis, the utterance may be received. It is to the inimitable wines that the gay-looking little towns of Epernay, Ay, and Château-Thierry owe their prosperity. True, there is plenty of fruit in the valley through which the lazy Marne winds its way with broad barges as comfortable as yachts on its spacious bosom. But man does not live by fruit alone, or mainly. The grain is not good in this part of the world. The light chalky soil does not agree with it.

Nor at a casual glance does this soil seem to suit the grapes themselves in an uncommon degree. The vines are of no particular height or density; and the bunches of fruit are not very large. But the crushing tells another tale. They are very prolific of juice, and even a third or fourth pressure will give a wine called Champagne, which a stranger with an uneducated palate and a patient stomach may pronounce sufficiently toothsome. This is the Champagne so boldly shown in the inferior shops of Rheims, and offered to the eager tourist at a shilling and fivepence the full-sized bottle. The ladies do not find much fault with it, because of its sweetness. But to a man of mature age and judgment it is nothing less than horrible. It is as apt to torture the stomach as to please the tongue—'for though good Champagne is one of the wholesomest of wines, the bad is more than commonly pernicious.'

The visitor to Champagne must not expect to buy good Pommery or Mumm much cheaper than he could buy it in England. Somehow, notwithstanding import duties, there is no difference between the wine lists of a good London hotel and the best hotels in Rheims. Nor is the *vin*

ordinaire of the country the familiar sparkling beverage which exhilarates by its mere appearance. It is an indifferent still red wine, not to be named with the *vin ordinaire* of the Burgundian towns. I felt the disappointment keenly when I sat to my first meal in the centre of the Champagne country. This was at Epernay, where the hostess of the hotel herself played the part of waitress. For fellow-guests at table I had divers comfortable-looking merchants, one of whom, in contrasting the wages of the labourer in different parts of France, told of a lace factory in the neighbourhood where the girls earn five halfpence a day and no more. A franc and a half a week does not seem much even in France, where the necessities of life cost considerably less than they cost with us.

Work in the Champagne vaults of Rheims and Epernay is much better remunerated than are these poor factory girls. It is not altogether the most pleasant occupation in the world. The smell of Champagne is very strong. I have heard of men who, after simple inhalation of it, for a time showed signs of slight intoxication. But such an experience is of course quite innocuous. We have it on good authority that no one ever suffers in the after-results caused by Champagne: conditionally, however, upon the Champagne being of undoubted quality. You may, in fact, drink a quantity of Pommery's 1884, and you will the next day feel better than if you had taken but a few spoonfuls of the highly effervescent stuff in the shop-windows at one franc seventy-five centimes the bottle, or threepence the long glassful. Even the idea that gout could be caused by Champagne has been seriously dissipated by medical men in conclave. Among the hundreds of men and women who find employment in the cellars of Moët and Chandon, Geisler, Mumm, Heidsieck, Pommery, Goulet, and the other famous firms of Rheims and Epernay, you will not see any signs of gout. To be sure the workpeople are not allowed to drink Champagne *ad libitum*. But they are human beings with ordinary liability to

yield to temptation; and with thousands of bottles bursting in the cellars month after month, it were manifestly as easy to pour a little of the wine down their throats as to turn it into the gutter which traverses the miles of galleries in which the bottles are racked.

These people have to work in a temperature uniformly wintry. In the dog-days it must be trying to some constitutions to descend after the dinner interval from an air hot enough to melt butter into an atmosphere only about fifteen degrees above the freezing-point. It is so damp too. The walls of the chalk are green and trickling; and in an hour or two the coat you are wearing will feel as if you had been in a shower. Remember, too, that it is exceedingly gloomy in these caverns, so damp and cold, and that you are about a hundred and forty feet below the street pavements. Then you will probably not think good pay at all too generous a concession to the men who spend nine or ten hours daily thus interred out of sight. It is not a healthy existence. Even with the added privilege of drinking as much red wine as inclination desires, the temptation to enter the service of Messrs Heidsieck of Rheims need not be irresistible. There is also a certain peril from the bursting bottles which ought not to be forgotten.

Upon the whole, it is better to be a vine-grower than a wine-maker, at least in the subordinate branches of the two industries. 'The culture of the vine,' we are told by French authorities, 'is not only the richest of industries; it is also the most salubrious. The people who devote themselves to it are the healthiest and most prolific. Among fifteen conscripts in a vine-growing district ten will be found fit for service: elsewhere, the proportion is ten in twenty-five.' An old proverb is still current in Languedoc which says, 'The vine begets many leaves and more pence, but more children than leaves and pence put together.' It is, in fact, enough merely to look at the blue-smocked workers among the dry soil of the vineyards on the slopes of the mountain of Rheims, to realise that they are fine fellows. They carry themselves admirably: and the same may be said of the women and girls who help them in their labours.

One half expects, upon arrival in Rheims, to see Champagne bottles littering the streets, and to hear the popping of corks every minute in the day. But this is, of course, a very fanciful estimate of the effect of the industry. Rheims is really a tranquil old place, with nothing in it so exciting as its fame. The cathedral is not at all suggestive of Champagne. It is a wonder of Gothic art, and transports one far, far away from thoughts about 'Dry Monopole' and the wine-lists in general. The jackdaws continue to wheel about the chipped and scarred statues which bedeck its noble façade; and the sober music of its bells sounds at dawn over the old

red roofs and the new red roofs of the city, much to the discomfort of those who have been bold enough to engage rooms in the hotels within but a stone's-throw of its portals. Rheims is the seat of the first ecclesiastic in France. The archiepiscopal palace adjoins the cathedral upon the south side, and an imposing porter guards the entrance to it. The contrast between a Christian dignitary and Champagne is extreme; and yet it is not so very unfit that the first churchman and the noblest wine of France should be found in the same town, when one remembers that it is just to the patience and cultivated palate of the old monks that we owe not only the beginning of Champagne but the origin of most other of the choice wines of the land. These old recluses devoted themselves to their wines as other men devoted themselves to their leather-selling and bread-baking. They learned the capabilities of their soil, and improved their grapes by careful grafting and the most zealous of tending. And afterwards experience and the leisure to continue to experiment taught them how the wine might best be made and stored so as to mellow it to perfection.

It must not be supposed, however, that the sparkle of Champagne is due to external aid. It is not an affair of drugs. This, and this more than aught else, is the specialty of the Champagne grapes. And the treatment of the grapes at the picking fosters the quality. The fruit is picked with the utmost care—bruised or over-ripe grapes being rejected, and they are pressed immediately while still cool. There are no secrets in the cellars of Rheims, like those of the Benedictines at the Chartreuse. You or I might set up a Champagne factory to-morrow with fair hope of being able to do well—the only requisite being capital of about a quarter of a million sterling and a vast deal of patience. But it would be hard now to find cellars unclaimed like those which Messrs Pommery, Goulet, and others have inherited from the Romans, and which are the very thing for so capricious a wine as Champagne. This should be kept 'where no motion can affect it, and as far as possible from the vibration or rather trembling of the earth from the traffic over granite pavements.' At a depth of more than a hundred feet such security from disturbance may well be thought complete. Manifestly, however, miles of excavations of this kind are not to be made without much expense. Besides, it is necessary to have staying-power at one's bankers, in other words a good balance to withstand the adverse strain of adverse years. The following is as applicable to merchants as to private consumers: 'Good wine is most frequently to be found among capitalists who can afford to buy up large quantities in favourable years, the cheapest mode of purchase, who can bottle as it may be deemed most fitting for the contents of their cellars, and who have a reputation to lose.' The last condition is as potent as

any. Of itself alone it is enough to terrify the aspirant towards the establishment of a new brand out of a city in which the existing merchants' grandsires or predecessors of the third and fourth generation began to build the fame they enjoy to-day. Much courage is required to enable a man and his heirs to hold on in confidence through ill report as well as good report for nine or ten decades. That is why, it seems, the old houses of Champagne are in no fear of the effects of competition.

Of the various show-cellars in Rheims, perhaps those of Messrs Pommery will most excite the admiration of the visitor. The establishment occupies a large enclosed area on the skirts of the city, and its bright red buildings have a suggestion of the opulence that has come from Champagne-making. The carts with their burdens of cases bearing directions to all parts of the civilised world meet you in the courtyard to hint at the immense growth of the appreciation of Champagne during this century.

About five hundred and fifty persons find employment on these premises. It is employment of a very varied kind. The courteous old cellarer-in-chief who receives the visitor in the great hall is to the young hands of the factory a personage of immense regard, and as much above them as the President of the Republic himself. Yet to the eye he is just such a one as the man who takes you in hand as a guide and gives you a candle to illumine the way as if you were descending into a coal-pit. He wears the traditional blue smock. But very little conversation with him enables you to judge that he is a man of culture. Indeed, the surroundings of his office are of themselves a mild education. On the walls are two or three notable pictures which have won esteem in the *salons* of Paris. Besides, is he not called upon day after day to entertain people of some distinction? His visitors' book proves this to you. Capitalists from America, statesmen from England, princes from Russia, and smart journalists from Paris, are among his weekly guests. And he is equal to the task of amusing them for half an hour at least; though, to be sure, he is likely to be much aided by the bottles of Pommery which are opened as a matter of course to add to the visitor's pleasure.

The bloused Englishman who offers himself as cicerone in the great hall may whisper to you as you leave the worthy cellarer that this gentleman's income is about two thousand pounds a year. It seems astonishing; but you have no time to wonder over so small an affair. You are at the head of a long flight of steps which lead you from the ground-level into the bowels of the earth, where there are miles of bottles of Champagne. The great model of a Chinese pagoda in the hall, which you pass on your way, has no occult connection with wine-making or even wine-drinking. It is merely a decoration of the establishment, like the *salon* pictures and—if the old gentleman will pardon the words—the excellent cellarer-in-chief himself.

Of the like nature are the surprising tableaux

in stone which meet the eye in three or four of the galleries. These are the work of a Rheims artist named Narlet, and all done within the last decade. They have a very realistic effect, indeed, in the half-darkness. You might fancy that the Bacchus upon the wall would, at a summons, descend and share a bottle of the clear primrose-hued liquor at his feet. The banquet scene, too, in which ladies and gentlemen of the last century are toasting each other in a condition of extreme animation, and of course drinking Champagne, is admirably designed and well executed. It is nothing in detraction of the artist to be told that he was paid by the hour for his work like a mere stamper of corks.

From one gallery we pass to another with bottles ever alongside. Here and there we come upon a broad beam of light which streams down a spacious vertical shaft in the rock. These shafts are not to be found in all the cellars of Rheims. They are a strong spectacular feature. Also they may be said to have a sanitary value for the workers themselves. Messrs Heidsieck's underground premises seem more insalubrious for the lack of such inrush of drier air. It is possible enough that the wine does not require them, since coolness and damp suit the maturing Champagne; but even in this nursery of great brands, one cannot altogether forget the welfare of the men who spend the best part of their lives among the bottles.

The operatives themselves are seen faintly in the corridors, some at work turning the bottles to tilt the sediment towards the cork; others carrying baskets of the matured wine to the packing-house up-stairs; and yet others engaged in the *dégagement* of the sediment, which may be said to have all come to the surface in the second year of the wine. This last is a nice performance. Not every man is a born 'disgorger,' as the operator is termed; some men are so clumsy, that in freeing the cork and the sediment they spill a measurable quantity of the transparent wine also. With one bottle in fifty that would not matter. But there are about fifteen million bottles in this great series of cellars, and each bottle has to undergo this process. The skilful disgorger is therefore a valuable servant. He cuts the string, expels the accumulation, and passes the bottle to the next man, to refill with sweet Champagne liqueur, all in a moment or two. Then the bottle is corked by machinery—for the last time—transferred to the wireers, who also have a machine which cuts wires of uniform length; and from them it is duly conveyed up-stairs to be beautified with gay tinfoil, labelled, and sent to its destination. It is fitting that the fair sex should have charge of the æsthetic stage in the life of a bottle of Champagne. The corks, the tinfoiling, and the labelling are their province.

A conscientious study of vaults as spacious as Messrs Pommery's exacts several hours; that is, if you are a wine-merchant and anxious to thoroughly understand the genesis of Champagne. But the ordinary visitor will obtain a sufficiently broad idea of the industry and its methods in an hour or two. That also will be time enough to make him long for the upper air. But before he leaves the establishment, the hospitable chief-cellarer will account him absurdly ascetic if he

will not consent to drink a glass or two of the wine with the bottles of which he has become so familiar. There need be no difficulty about obliging him in this particular.

THE IVORY GATE.*

By WALTER BESANT.

CHAPTER XVII.—THE VOICE OF DUTY.

ELSIE in her studio was at work. She was painting a fancy portrait. You have seen how, before her interview with Mr Dering, she transformed him from a hard and matter-of-fact lawyer into a genial, benevolent old gentleman. She was now elaborating this transformation. It is a delightful process, known to every portrait-painter, whereby a face faithfully represented becomes the face of another person, or the face as it might be, so that a hard and keen face, such as Mr Dering's, may become a face ennobled with spiritual elevation, benevolence, charity, and kindness of heart. Or, on the other hand, without the least change of feature, this hard keen face may become, by the curve of a line or the addition of a shadow, the face of a cruel and pitiless Inquisitor. Or, again, any face, however blurred and marred by the life of its owner, may by the cunning portrait-painter be restored to the face intended by its Maker, that is to say, a sweet and serious face. Great indeed is the power, marvellous is the mystery, of the limner's art.

'Now,' Elsie murmured, 'you look like some great philanthropist—a thoughtful philanthropist, not a foolish person: your high forehead and your sharp nostril proclaim that you are no impulsive gusher: your kindly eyes beam with goodness of heart: your lips are firm because you hate injustice. Oh my dear guardian, how much I have improved you! Something like this you looked when you told me of my fortune—and like this when you spoke of your dream, and your illusions—something like this—you looked.'

She went on working at her fantasy, crooning a simple ditty, composed of many melodies running into one, as girls use when they are quite happy. The afternoon was hot. Outside, Elsie's windows looked upon a nest of little London gardens, where nasturtiums twisted round strings upon the walls; hollyhocks and sunflowers, which love the London smoke, lifted their heads; and Virginia creepers climbed to the house-tops. The little London gardens do sometimes look gay and bright in the yellow glow of a July afternoon. The window was open, and the room was almost as hot as the street outside; we get so few hot days that one here and there cannot be too hot. On the table lay a photograph of her lover; over the mantel hung her own drawing in Pastel of that swain: on her finger was his ring: round her neck lay his chain: all day long she was reminded of him, if she should cease for a moment to think of him. But there was no need of such reminder. It was Friday afternoon, four days after the great Discovery. Elsie had been informed of the event, the news of which she received after the feminine manner, with an

ejaculation of surprise and an interjection of sympathy. But one cannot expect a girl on the eve of her marriage to be greatly distressed because her guardian, a rich man, is annoyed by the temporary loss of certain shares. And as to finding the criminal and getting back those shares—it was man's work. All the troublesome and disagreeable part of the world's work belongs to man.

It was nearly five o'clock. Elsie was beginning to think that she had done enough, and that, after tea, a walk in the Gardens might be pleasant. Suddenly, without any noise or warning of steps outside, her door was opened and her sister Hilda appeared. Now, so swift is the feminine perception, that Elsie instantly understood that something had happened—something bad—something bad to herself. For first, the door was opened gently, as in a house of mourning; and next, Hilda had on a dress—lavender with heliotrope, costly, becoming, sympathetic, and sorrowful—a half-mourning dress—and she stood for a moment at the door with folded hands, her classical head inclined a little downward to the left, and her eyes drooping—an artistic attitude of sadness. Hilda not only said the right thing and held the proper sentiments, but she liked to assume the right attitude and to personate the right emotion. Now, it is given to woman, and only to her when she is young, tall, and beautiful, to express by attitude all or any of the emotions which transport or torture her fellow-creatures. Hilda, you see, was an artist.

'Come in, dear,' said Elsie. 'I am sure that you have got something disagreeable to tell me.'

Hilda kissed her forehead. 'My poor child,' she murmured. 'If it could have been told you by anybody else!'

'Well—let us hear it. Is it anything very disagreeable?'

'It is terrible. I tremble—I dare not tell you. Yet I must. You ought to know.'

'If you would go on. It is much more terrible to be kept in suspense.'

'It is about George.'

'Oh?' said Elsie, flaming. 'I have had so much trouble about George already, that I did think'—

'My dear, all opposition of the former kind is removed, as you know. This is something very different. Worse,' she added in a hollow voice—'far worse.'

'For Heaven's sake, get along.'

'He has told you about the dreadful robbery. Of course you have talked about nothing else since it happened. I found my mother full of it.'

'Yes—George is in charge of the case. He says that everything must be recovered, and that Mr Dering will in the end suffer no more injury than the trouble of it.'

'That may be so. Elsie—I hardly dare to tell you—there is a clue. Checkley has got that clue, and has told Sir Samuel everything. He is following up the clue. I shudder to think of it. The man is as relentless as a bloodhound.'

'Does that clue concern me?' Her cheek became pale because she guessed—she knew not what.

'Sir Samuel, against his will, is convinced that

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Checkley has found the clue. He has told me the whole. He has consented to my telling the dreadful story to my mother and to you—and now I am afraid. Yet I must.

Elsie made a gesture of impatience.

'Go back, Elsie, eight years, if you can. Remember the wretched business of our unworthy brother.'

'I remember it. Not unworthy, Hilda. Our most unfortunate brother. Why, they have found the very notes he was charged with stealing. They were found in the safe on the very day when they made the other discovery. Have they not told you?'

'Checkley told Sir Samuel. He also remembers seeing Athelstan place the packet in the safe.'

'Oh! Does he dare to say that? Why, Hilda, the robbery was proved to lie between himself and Athelstan. If he saw that, why did he not say so? He keeps silence for eight long years, and then he speaks.'

Hilda shook her head sadly. 'I fear,' she said, 'that we cannot accept the innocence of our unfortunate brother. However, Athelstan was accused of forging Mr Dering's handwriting and signature. In this new forgery, the same handwriting is found again—exactly the same. The forger is the same.'

'Clearly, therefore, it cannot be Athelstan. That settles it.'

'Yes—unfortunately—it does settle it. Because, you see, Athelstan is in London. He is said to have been living in London all the time—in some wretched place called Camberwell, inhabited, I suppose, by runaways and low company of every kind. He has lately been seen in the neighbourhood of Gray's Inn, apparently passing under his own name. Checkley has seen him. Another person has seen him.'

'Have you come to tell me that Athelstan is charged with this new wickedness?'

'The forger must have had an accomplice in the office; a man able to get at the safe: able to intercept the post: acquainted with Mr Dering's ways: such a man as—say—Checkley—or—the only other possible—George,' Hilda paused.

'Oh! This is too absurd. You are now hinting that George—my George,' she said proudly, 'was the confederate of Athelstan—no—of a forger.'

'They have been seen together. They have been seen together at the house from which the forger addresses his letters. Has George told you that he has known all along—for eight years—of Athelstan's residence in London?'

Observe how that simple remark made in the *Salutation Parlour*, that Athelstan must have been living in Camberwell, had by this time grown into a complete record of eight years' hiding, eight years' disgraceful company, on the part of one; and eight years' complicity and guilty knowledge on the part of the other. Hilda had not the least doubt. It was quite enough for her that Checkley said so. Half the contents of our newspapers are conducted on the same confiding principle.

'If George has not told me,' Elsie replied, 'it must be for some good reason. Perhaps he was pledged to secrecy.'

'My dear'—Hilda rose impressively with fatal face—the hand that forged the letters is the hand that forged the cheque—your brother's hand. The hand that took the certificates from the safe—she laid her own upon Elsie's hand—the hand of the confederate, my poor sister is—your lover's hand.'

'I knew,' said the girl, 'that you were coming to this. I have felt it from the beginning.'

'Remember, the thing was done in the months of February, March, and April. First of all, Athelstan was then, as now, desperately poor: the life that he has led for the last eight years—the life of a—Camberwell profligate—she spoke as if that respectable suburb was the modern Alsatia—'has certainly destroyed whatever was left of honour and of principle. There comes a time, I have read, in the career of every wicked man when he hesitates no longer whatever means are offered him of making money. Athelstan it was—so they believe—who devised this scheme, which has been as successful as it is disgraceful. My dear Elsie, this is the most terrible disgrace that has ever befallen my family: the most dreadful and the most unexpected calamity for you.'

Elsie caught her sister by the wrist. 'In the name of God, Hilda, are you telling me what is proved and true, or what is only suspected?'

'I am telling you what is as good as proved. More than suspected.'

'As good as proved. Oh!' Elsie drew a long breath. 'As good as proved. That is enough. Like Athelstan's guilt eight years ago,' she flared out suddenly, springing up again and walking about the room. 'Oh! it is wonderful!' she cried—'wonderful! What a family we are! We had a brother, and we believed that he was an honourable gentleman, as the son of his father must be. Then there was a charge, a foolish charge, based upon nothing but may—have—been and must—have—been— We believed the charge.'

'Because we had no choice but to believe, Elsie,' her sister interrupted. 'Do you think we wanted to believe the charge?'

'We should have believed him innocent until the thing was proved. We did not. We cast him out from among us; and now, after eight years—he has come back poor, you say, and sunk so low that he is ashamed to see his people, and we are going to believe another charge based on may have been and must have been. No, Hilda. I will not believe it—I will not.—And then there is George. If I cease to believe in his honour and his truth, I cease to believe in everything. I cannot believe in Heaven itself unless I believe in my lover. Why, his heart is light about this business: he is not concerned: he laughs at that old man's ravings. Ravings? If Athelstan is right, then his is the hand that has done it all—his—Hilda—Checkley is the man concerned with both crimes.'

Hilda shook her head. 'No, Elsie, no. The old man is above suspicion.'

'Why should he be above suspicion more than George? And you ask me on the first breath of accusation to treat George as you treated Athelstan. Well—Hilda, I will not.'

'I make every allowance for you, Elsie. It is a most dreadful business—a heart-breaking

business. You may misrepresent me as much as you please—I will continue to make allowances for you. Meantime, what will you do?

'Do? What should I do? Nothing, nothing, nothing. I shall go on as if this thing had never happened.'

'Sir Samuel ordered me to warn you most seriously. If you consent to see him again?—'

'Consent? Consent? Why should I refuse? In a fortnight he will be my husband and my master, whom I must obey. He calls me his mistress now, but I am his servant. Consent to see him?' She sat down and burst into tears.

'If you see him again,' her sister continued, 'warn him to leave the country. The thing is so certain that in a day or two the proofs will be complete, and it will then be too late. Make him leave the country. Be firm, Elsie. Better still refuse to see him at all and leave him to his fate. What a fate! What madness!'

'We allowed Athelstan to leave the country. He ought to have stayed. If I advise George at all I shall advise him to stick to his post and see the business through. If he were to leave the country, I would go with him.'

'You are infatuated, Elsie. I can only hope that he may fly the country of his own accord. Meantime, there is one other point'—

'What is it? Pray, don't spare me, Hilda. After what has gone before, it must be a very little point.'

'You are bitter, Elsie, and I don't deserve your bitterness. But that is nothing. At such a moment everything must be pardoned and permitted. The point is about your wedding. It is fixed for the 12th of next month, less than three weeks from to-day. You must be prepared to put it off.'

'Indeed? Because you say that a thing impossible is as good as proved! Certainly not, Hilda.'

'I have come here to-day, Elsie, by Sir Samuel's express wish, in order to soften the blow and to warn you. Whether you will tell—that unhappy young man or not, is for you to decide. Perhaps, if you do, he may imitate our unworthy brother and run away. If he does not, the blow will fall to-morrow—to-day—the day after to-morrow—I know not when. He will be arrested: he will be taken before a magistrate: he will be remanded: he will be out on bail. Oh, Elsie, think of marrying a man out on bail! One might as well marry a man in convict dress. Oh! Horrible!'

'I would rather marry George in convict dress than any other man in fine raiment. Because, once more, the thing is impossible.'

'You carry your faith in your lover beyond bounds, Elsie. Of course a girl is right to believe in a man's honour. It makes her much more comfortable, and gives her a sense of security. Besides, we always like to believe that we are loved by the best of men. That makes us feel like the best of women.—But in this case, when I tell you that Sir Samuel—a man who has always lived among money—so to speak—and knows how money is constantly assailed—is firmly convinced of George's complicity, I do think that you might allow something for human frailty. In the case of Athelstan, what did Mr

Dering say? Everything is possible. So I say of George Austin, everything is possible.'

'Not everything. Not that.'

'Yes, even that.—What do you know of his private life? Why has he concealed the fact of Athelstan's residence in London? Why has he never told us of his friendship with that unfortunate outcast?'

'I don't know. He has his reasons.'

'It is a most dreadful thing for you,' Hilda went on, 'And after getting to believe in the man and—well—becoming attached to him—though such attachments mean little and are soon forgotten—and after going the length of fixing the day and ordering the dress and the wedding-cake and putting up the banns— Oh! it is a wretched business—a horrible misfortune. The only thing to be said is that in such a case, the fact being known to everybody, no one can blame a girl; and perhaps, in the long run, she will suffer no injury from it. Our circle, for instance, is so different from that of this young man's friends, that the thing would not even be known among us.'

'I believe, Hilda, you will drive me mad.'

'My dear, one must look ahead. And remember that I look ahead for you. As for the young man, I dissociate him henceforth from you. What he does and where he goes I do not inquire, or care about any more than I trouble myself about a disgraceful brother. Some acts cut a man off from his mistress—from his sisters—from the world.'

'Do not talk any more,' said Elsie. 'Let the blow, as you call it, fall when it pleases. But as for me, I shall not warn George that he is to be charged with dishonesty, any more than I will believe him capable of dishonesty.'

'Well, my dear, there is one comfort for us. You may resolve on marrying him. But a man charged with a crime—out on bail—cannot marry any girl. And he will be charged, and the evidence is very strong.'

'No doubt. As good as proved—as good as proved. Poor George! Who never had ten pounds in the world until he was made a partner'—

'True. And there we have the real motive. Seek the motive, Sir Samuel says, and we shall find the criminal. Here you have the reason of the secret partnership with Athelstan. Poverty is the tempter—Athelstan is the suggester.'

Elsie shook her head impatiently.

'Mr Dering was to give you away. Who will now? Athelstan? How can we—Sir Samuel and I—assist at a wedding where the bridegroom lies under such a charge? by one so near to us as Mr Dering? How can your mother be present? Oh, Elsie—think!'

Elsie shook her head again, with greater impatience.

'Think what a fate you may be dragging upon yourself! Think of possible children with such a brand upon them!'

'I think only of an honourable and an innocent man.'

'I have just come from my mother, Elsie. She says positively that if the charge is brought, the wedding must be put off until the man is cleared. And for the moment she does not feel strong enough to meet him. You can receive

him here, if you please. And she desires that there may be no disputes or arguments about it.

'It is truly wonderful!' Elsie walked to the open window and gasped as if choking. 'Wonderful!' she repeated. 'The same fate—in the same manner—threatens George that fell upon Athelstan. And it finds us as ready to believe in the charge and to cast him out.—Now, Hilda, go to my mother and tell her that though the whole world should call George—my George—a villain, I will marry him. Tell her that though I should have to take him from the prison door, I will marry him. Because, you see, all things are not possible. This thing is impossible.'

'We shall have trouble with Elsie,' Lady Dering told her mother. 'Call her soft and yielding! My dear, no mule was ever more stubborn. She will marry her convict, she says, even at the prison door.'

THE EVERLASTING HILLS.

It is not surprising that the Hebrews and others of old time should have looked upon the hills as 'everlasting'—at least in the sense of lasting as long as the world itself. But to the present age they have at last told something of their story, and have declared themselves to be but temporary phases in a landscape which has been and ever will be undergoing slow but continual change. The beautiful hills of our own native land have the same doom of decay and death written upon them. They have not ever been where we now see them—in Scotland, Wales, or Cumberland. Nor will they ever remain. Like other things, they 'come and go,' and cannot be said to be 'everlasting.' It will be our endeavour in the present paper to expound this important truth, and to show in simple language how mountains are made, how they get their varied outlines, and how they finally suffer destruction—in fact, to trace the cycle of changes through which they pass, and to point out that, like living things, they have a life-history of their own.

Mountains play a very important part in the economy of the world, purifying the air, supplying soils for the plains, and creating streams and rivers, which bring life and fertility with them. But on this aspect of the hills we cannot dwell now. Enough if we can briefly trace their birth, growth, and death or destruction. Our Poet-laureate has aptly expressed the truth we wish to expound, in the words:

The hills are shadows, and they flow
From form to form, and nothing stands;
They melt like mists, the solid lands,
Like clouds they shape themselves to go.

In dealing with the geological aspects of the subject—that is, with the origin and mode of formation of mountains—we find that the subject naturally falls into three divisions: (1) We must consider how the stony rocks of which mountains are composed are brought together and compacted. (2) How mountains reach their present elevated positions; and (3) How they assumed their present outlines, and were carved out into all those wonderful details which afford us so much joy in beholding, of valley and peak, of crag and pinnacle and precipice. A simple illustration will

make this quite clear. Suppose we were standing in front of a great and beautiful cathedral, such as Amiens, and trying to picture to ourselves how it was created. We should have to consider how the separate stones of which it is composed were brought together; how they were elevated to their present positions; and lastly, how their graceful outlines were given to them. Thus the work divides itself into three divisions—transportation, elevation, and ornamentation. A little reflection would convince us that the transportation was effected by a system of carts and horses hauling stone from quarries far and near; that the elevation was effected by men working with ropes and pulleys to get the stones into position; and that the ornamentation was accomplished by masons armed with hammer and chisel, who day by day carved the rough blocks into tracery, finials, figures, &c. To make the comparison complete, we should suppose that *all* the carving was done after the stones had been put in their places; but this, probably, was not the case. Let us take each of these operations in turn, and endeavour to trace their workings, in order to gain a clear idea of the history of Nature's cathedrals, not made with hands, and far more wonderful and beautiful than those earthly temples to which we have compared the mountain masses of the world.

First comes the work of transportation, or bringing together of the vast amount of rocky material contained in a mountain chain. It is evident that they have been brought together; for one of the first facts to be learned by examining almost any groups of mountains would be that their rocks are composed of layers, called 'strata' by geologists, and that the layers themselves, when closely looked into, prove to be made up of particles or grains of various sizes. We are not speaking now of volcanoes, which have quite a different origin; or of volcanic rocks, such as granite and basalt, which are frequently to be found in mountainous districts; but of mountains generally it may be said that they are built of stratified materials, such as clays, sandstones, and limestones, in some form or other. These materials may have been altered by heat and pressure—when deeply buried below the earth—into their respective metamorphic forms—namely, slates and schists, quartzites and marbles; but that does not affect the general statement just made. Now it is proved beyond doubt that all such rocks, with very few exceptions, have been formed or put together under water. Some were deposited in ancient seas, others in lakes and estuaries, mostly by a simple process of settling down or a deposition. This, however, does not apply to the limestones, which are chiefly built up of the remains of marine calcareous organisms; it is hardly necessary to add that the layers or strata thus formed are horizontal. This constitutes an important axiom in geology, and whenever we find strata in inclined or elevated positions, it may be safely concluded that some subsequent influences have been at work to raise them from their native horizontal. Hence it is clear that all mountains, except volcanoes, have been raised up. The rocks of our continents must also have been lifted up out of the seas wherein they were formed. But in their case the disturbance

has been comparatively slight compared with the violent flexures and foldings to which the highly bent and contorted strata of mountains testify.

Let us now inquire into the source of the great supplies of material necessary to keep up the work of rock-building which is still going on, as it went on throughout geological time. Of the limestones we have already spoken; to explain their origin would require a separate paper; but we may briefly consider the case of the clays and sandstones. They are derived from the wear and tear of continents and islands. All lands are more or less exposed to atmospheric influences, and the destructive effects of rain and rivers. Any old weather-beaten building will serve to show that even hard stone can be corroded and worn down by rain and wind, &c. This illustrates on a small scale what Nature does on a large one. 'Nothing stands.' All, even the most stubborn rocks, must in time suffer decay at the hands of the elements. It would take too long to describe how this is accomplished; but to put it briefly, the atmosphere, by means of the oxygen and carbonic acid it contains, exerts a decaying influence on all rocks, and so facilitates their further destruction. Changes from heat to cold will often cause rocks to split. When water gets into the joints and freezes, it acts like a powerful wedge—on account of expansion—and so breaks off portions of rock, mountain tops, and peaks; the sides of the cliffs must be greatly broken by this means, and the sides of mountains frequently show masses of loose angular débris which has fallen from above. Then come the mountain streams running down their valleys, and carrying with them the débris of rocks higher up, rubbing off their corners and wearing them away, till finally nothing but tiny grains of mud and sand are left, like the sandy mud formed on a grindstone after using it. As fast as the mountain sides and crags split up, their débris is thus ground up and carried away. Streams, rivers, and glaciers are all great transporting agents, bringing down these materials—as well as the soils which represent decayed and broken rocks—from higher to lower levels, from the mountains down to lakes and seas. Again, the streams, rivers, and glaciers are all powerful agents of erosion as well as of transportation. Even a small stream can, if its fall is rapid, cut a deep ravine out of solid rock. With a sufficient velocity, it may in time accomplish a vast amount of rock-cutting. The grandest examples of this kind of action are the cañons of Colorado, from three to six thousand feet deep!

Thus we see that the débris of the land is finally swept into the sea: these are the agents that 'draw down Æonian hills, and sow the dust of continents to be.' Thus the sea is the great workshop where all these land-derived materials are brought together, and slowly settle down in horizontal layers, thus forming new strata out of old ones. They will in turn suffer elevation, be converted into dry land, and some day be again brought under the destructive influences of denudation. There is thus a never-ending cycle of operations taking place; and just as Cairo has been built of stone derived from the Pyramids, and the lost city of Memphis,

which the Arabs used as quarries, so the lands of one age are used by Nature to build up the continents of the future. If some of her actions are destructive, others, again, are constructive; and thus one set of operations is balanced by another, and harmony is the result.

We have now to consider the second stage in the life-history of a mountain chain or mass—namely, elevation; in other words, how did the strata get raised up, in some cases to heights over twenty thousand feet?

That they have been raised up follows as a consequence from the proposition that they were deposited in seas, lakes, &c.; and if further evidence were needed, in the numerous contortions, crumplings, and foldings—the last often on a prodigious scale—exhibited in the strata themselves; and it is probable that at times they have been convulsed in their upward struggle. For we often find that they have been fractured by the crushing and upheaving forces to which they have been subjected. In fact, fractures are numerous in all disturbed regions, and perhaps each fracture gave rise to an earthquake! But still Lyell's theory of Uniformity in all geological operations has so greatly advanced the science of geology, that some have carried it too far, and we must admit that occasionally even quiet processes may become violent. Thus, we may imagine the gentle upheaval of a mountain range to continue quietly for a long period, until at last the tension of the rocks becomes more than can be borne, and they snap violently; and then a considerable disturbance would result.

There is abundant evidence to show that slow movements both of elevation and subsidence are now taking place, and have been going on in every geological age, as well as within the human period; but to account for such movements is another matter. At first, the attempt seems rather hopeless. Where are we to look for a force sufficient to raise continents, throw up and crumple the rocks into mountain chains? But I think we shall be able to offer a reasonable explanation, and to find a force sufficient even for this task. Until recent years, it was usual to ascribe this work to the energy which displays itself in volcanic phenomena, or in other words to heat. But this was a false theory. Heat has much to do with both volcanic action and the upheaving of rocks; but the energy of volcanic eruptions must be attributed to highly-heated and compressed steam—supplied by the water contained in deeply-buried rocks—whereas the earth-movements we are now considering cannot be shown to be due to the same cause, but rather to one of an opposite kind—namely, loss of heat.

Let us bear in mind that the earth is a cooling globe. Modern science teaches that it was once red-hot, and has been slowly cooling through subsequent ages. Few will dispute this theory when they look into the evidence. Taking this supposition for granted, let us inquire into the consequences following from it. We know that nearly all solid bodies contract on cooling. So does the earth; and the hotter portions below the surface—although solid—contract faster than the cooler and more rigid external crust. The consequence is that the outer shell of the earth

is in some places left unsupported. Its weight, which must be prodigious, soon begins to tell, and it gradually sinks, in order to adapt itself to the smaller surface below. Now it cannot do this without becoming wrinkled and thrown into numerous folds. We see this well illustrated in the case of a dried apple, the skin of which, owing to shrinkage below, has become creased. An old person's hand or face shows the same thing. And so we must regard mountain chains as wrinkles on the face of Mother Earth, telling us that she is no longer in the freshness of youth. We have in this process a very powerful force let loose, as it were—namely, gravitation acting upon great masses of strata. This is great enough to account for all the phenomena. Even in coal-mines the unsupported strata of the roof will 'creep' or slowly settle down. Now the result of the subsidence on a large scale will be lateral pressure at right angles to the chief folds, drawing the strata up in ever-increasing folds towards the main chain, so as to get them into a smaller horizontal space. The elevation will of course be greatest where the folds are greatest; and the folds on either side of the mountain range will get less and less as we pass from the range, until we come to a kind of arch, or a slight upheaval constituting a continent. Mountain ranges, then, are the backbones of continents.

This very acceptable theory, thus briefly explained, seems to account for all the facts, and shows that the same agency—namely, secular cooling of the earth—crumples strata into mountain chains and heaves up continents. The big downward folds beyond the continents will be the troughs of oceans, for there must be downward as well as upward folds. This theory will also account for volcanic and earthquake action. It seems to harmonise and bring into definite relations a mass of facts otherwise unintelligible. In most mountain chains the strata show that they have undergone considerable changes in their mineral composition and general state. Clay-slates, quartzites, mica, schists, and gneisses are but altered forms of ordinary clays and sandstones. And perhaps even granite is but a highly altered form of clay-slate which has been melted and slowly cooled under pressure. These and other facts connect volcanic action with the upheaval of mountain chains, and so with metamorphism. But whether the heat necessary to accomplish all this was supplied by the crushing force thus brought into operation—according to Mr Mallet's view—or is part of the earth's internal heat, it is hard to say. But all those who are familiar with mountains will have noticed the crystalline character of the rocks of the elevated axes, and will admit a close connection between rock-crumping and metamorphic action. The most beautiful gems and most valued mineral ores are generally found in mountainous countries. We do not look for silver and gold in the chalk downs of Surrey, or for tin and lead in the London Tertiaries; but we may find them in crumpled rocks of Cornwall, Wales, or Scotland.

It now only remains to consider the third question of ornamentation, and to explain briefly how mountains get their rugged and varied outlines. And first, it is necessary to remark that

in no cases are the outlines of mountains due directly to the folds and crumpings of which we have spoken. Of some minor folds, such as the Jura mountains, that is true; but these are exceptions. We must look not to internal structure but to external influences to account for the forms of mountains. Their sloping or rounded sides, towering crags and pinnacles, their precipices and deep valleys, are all due mainly to those atmospheric and denuding influences to which we have already alluded. Atmospheric decay, frost, heat, and cold, all play an important part in carving away at the more exposed parts of mountains, and help to carve them out into their wonderful shapes, which will be partly determined by the directions of their natural divisions, and partly by the nature of the rocks themselves; the positions of the strata also have an influence in determining shapes. An arch or 'anticline' will be worn away, being somewhat broken open and loosened; while a trough or 'syncline,' being more compact, and held together by lateral pressure, will more readily withstand denudation. Hence, single mountains are often synclines, while valleys are often broken and denuded 'anticlines.' Sometimes the highest peaks consist of strata standing right up on end, so that their destruction is less easily accomplished, and they last while other parts go. The joints and planes of stratification, &c., are the lines along which denuding agents work, just as quarrymen do.

But rain and rivers, snow and ice, are the chief agents at work carving out mountains and making the larger features. They are the masons continually at work on rocks; and their tools are streams, rivers, and glaciers. Streams and rivers carve out glens and valleys, thus making important features among the hills. Moreover, they bring down the rocky fragments which roll down mountain sides, rubbing off their corners, rounding them, and grinding them down to pebbles, and finally even into sand and mud. Thus the mountains are once more reduced to dust, from which they came. In mountains like the Alps, glaciers exert a considerable influence in deepening their valleys and transporting débris from higher to lower levels. They have formerly scratched and rounded the mountains of Wales, Cumberland, and Scotland, and their moraines are in many cases still left.

But water is the great denuding agent. We little think as we see the clouds hanging over the hills, that, soft and innocent and beautiful as they look, they yet are the instruments of destruction; for they contain the water, in the form of tiny suspended globules, which will in time work such wonders when they go together to form raindrops, and these are impelled by the winds or driven by gravitation down a rocky glen! The words of the Ettrick Shepherd express a scientific truth:

Who was it scooped those stony waves?
Who scalped the brows of old Cairngorm?
And dug these ever-yawning caves?
'Twas I, the Spirit of the storm.

It is almost incredible to what an extent some mountains have suffered at the hands of the various agents of denudation. In many cases thousands of feet of solid rock have been removed

from off the tops of mountain ranges, so that they are often mere stumps as to what they once were. Now, as before pointed out, all the débris goes into the seas, or lakes and estuaries, there to be reconstructed into rock. Thus we see that there is a continual cycle of change taking place, destruction being balanced by construction, and the two going on side by side. Thus we have shown that mountains go through a cycle of changes, and that the title at the head of this article is but a poetic fancy, and that the hills must as inevitably pass away as a flower must fade and die. But in their death and destruction we see that Nature is but laying the foundations of future hills, islands, &c., that even for them there is a kind of resurrection. In the words of Mr Ruskin, who has taught many true lessons from Nature to this generation: 'Death must be upon the hills, and the cruelty of the tempest must smite them, and the thorn and the briar spring up upon them; but the tempests so smite as to bring their rocks into the fairest forms, and the flowers so spring up as to make the very desert blossom as the rose.' As of the hills, so of ourselves we may say: 'Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.' So it is with the whole earth and with the heavens: 'They all shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed.'

MAJOR RANDALL'S WARNING.

By JESSIE MACLEOD.

IN THREE PARTS.—PART I.

ONE wintry evening, Major Mark Randall, of the 14th Regiment of Hussars, home on leave from Madras, descended from the train bound to York at a small station on the line to Boston, Lincolnshire. Although a tolerably fine day when he left London, it soon after began to rain, and increased to a steady downpour. In that retired country district it was dark as if late at night. The Major, carrying a small portmanteau in one hand, a stout stick in the other, was well protected by a thick ulster; and lighting a cigar, he set off on a cross-country walk he had known well enough in bygone years. He was bound to an old mansion at about four miles' distance, on a few days' visit to his maiden aunts, whom he had begged not to send a carriage to meet him at the station, as, having business matters to transact in London, the hour of his arrival would be very uncertain. Probably he now repented of this decision, for, after proceeding some yards, he turned back towards the station.

'I suppose it would be impossible to procure a conveyance over to Cressing Hall?' he called out to the porter, who was watching him from the door.

'Yes, sir. Unless bespoke, you'll not get nothing on wheels to-night. If you're bound to the Miss Ingestres', you'd better not go by the footpath. We've had so much rain of late, the drains is overflowed, and the waters is out.'

'But the road takes such a turn; it is nigh three miles longer,' said the Major.

'Better go a long tramp than take a short-cut to get drowned,' returned the porter.

Major Randall laughed; but having lived too long in the world to despise local advice, he took the road. Even that was by no means safe; the drains, as they are called in that county, are in reality very deep canals, skirting the roads, with unprotected sides, and very easily walked into by a person ignorant of the locality.

The officer started at first briskly; but the rain fell so fast that the atmosphere was blinding as a curtain, and he deemed it most prudent to proceed at a footpace. Even on a black night, there is a faint earth light on country roads; it was just sufficient for him to see the stones in their centres. He often lighted a fusee, but, unfortunately, they were soon exhausted. Occasionally, he saw the glimmer of a distant light, probably from a cottage window; but knowing that he was in the Fen county, he did not venture to seek it. The roads were perfectly open and unsheltered; if trees bounded them, they were tall poplars, affording no screen. And now the rain descended like a waterspout.

'A pleasant night this to be out in,' exclaimed a voice at his elbow, and he heard feet splashing through the slush beside him.

'Perhaps we may reach a road-side cottage,' said the Major.

'There are none. But I'll tell you what there is a little farther on—Bertoft old church; it has a porch.'

'That will do,' said the officer; and the two quickened their pace.

'Here it is,' cried the newcomer, presently darting to a lichgate, that, being painted white, stood out ghostly through the gloom. A short gravel path led across the ancient churchyard, bordered with tombstones, to the ample porch, with oaken seats on either side, and well protected from the rain.

'This is a famous shelter,' said the Major. 'If you have a fusee, I will offer you a cigar.'

'Thank you,' replied his companion; 'I never smoke.—Listen! There is the cry of a bittern; this must be the clearing-up shower; they do not cry unless the rain's going off. I shall not be sorry to get home, for I missed my train, and have a long walk to reach Boston.'

'I hope you know the roads well?'

'By heart,' answered the other. 'It's a pity that we have so much water in these parts; it gives Lincolnshire a bad name; and there's not a nicer county in England in summer-time; it smells of nothing but hay and clover; and the variety of grasses is wonderful to them as understands them.'

At this instant the church clock in the old tower above deliberately struck the quarters and then the hour of seven.

'It's getting late,' continued the stranger, whose voice was cheery and pleasant. 'I suppose I must be going on, bad as it is. I've had nothing but ill-luck to-day. It did not rain when I started to call on a person at Roby I particularly wished to see; but he was out. Then I missed the train; and am almost drenched to the skin; though that can't hurt me: we Lincolnshire folk are said to be half-frogs, you know; and he laughed merrily.

'If I remember rightly,' said the Major, 'this road divides at Bertoft.'

'Yes. One goes to Boston, the other to Spald-

ing. We are about a mile from the village. Bless you! watery as it is hereabouts, it's nothing to what it was once. In this churchyard they only dug the graves just in time for the funerals, for they filled with water directly; and as for Bertoft, I've heard my grandfather say he and another rowed through the village to the general shop to buy their stores; and shot wild-ducks in the fields close by; so that their boat was laden with provisions on the road home. My grandfather was a good shot; he'd been a soldier, and went through the Crimean War. These parts must have been bad in his day; them drains has done a sight of good.—And now, I'll wish you good-night, sir.'

'Good-evening,' said the Major; 'and I hope, for both our sakes, it will soon cease raining.'

He heard his companion, whose voice and words seemed those of a young man, walk quickly to the gate and his splashing footsteps die away in the distance. The darkness was such that he never saw him, therefore, had no idea of his appearance. The conversation they held together was short and trifling, yet destined to be words of intense importance to one of them.

After waiting some little time, the rain abated, and the Major resumed his journey, reaching his destination at half-past eight o'clock, tired with his long tramp, and very wet. His arrival caused quite an excitement, for the Miss Ingestres had given him up.

How familiar yet how different did these ladies appear to him—welcoming the bronzed, bearded soldier with the same voices, in their former affectionate manner, standing in the identical places in the entrance hall as in bygone years, when he visited them regularly at the vacations. Nothing had changed save themselves; the fine middle-aged women he had left were now two thin, wrinkled, old ladies—kind as ever, but more fussily so. As for himself, the gay heedless youth was now the tall experienced soldier of many battles, who had more than once been wounded.

After the first surprise at his changed appearance was over, they soon forgot it, and he was the 'dear boy' of former years. Seated at the hospitable table, where an admirable impromptu dinner was got up for him, adorned with its silver and crystal, also flowers brought in from the conservatories, surrounded by luxury, a splendid fire on the hearth, the red velvet curtains closely drawn, the carved oak furniture as he remembered it, and old family portraits on the walls—it was difficult to realise that he had been absent seventeen years, living what seemed a lifetime of change and peril. Here was unaltered peace. All he missed were the silver-haired butler, who had served his maternal grandfather, and the old hound Toby, who had been his companion in many a ramble.

'And have you been going on the same life here all these years?' he asked.

'Yes, dear boy—as you left us, so you find us. We have been several times to London just to get food for the mind, as I may say—new books, new music, to hear famous preachers, and to attend a few lectures at the Royal Institution, and a concert or two. But there is no place like home. When we are away, things go wrong, and the poor people miss us. We lead quiet lives.

Your letters were a great delight to us, and sometimes caused us much anxiety. We have followed you all through your career, dear Mark.'

'I feel as if I had never been away; and awakened from a long sleep full of dreams,' said the Major.

'You will not know Caroline when you see her,' said Aunt Lydia. 'She was a bride when you left; now, her eldest boy is at Eton; and as for her husband, who was such a waltzer, he cannot get a hunter strong enough to carry him.'

'Time brings its changes,' said the Major. 'I have a few visits to pay when I leave you; then I shall run down to Worcestershire and have a look at them.'

This referred to Major Randall's only sister, after whose wedding he had left for India.

There was no rain the following morning; and the Miss Ingestres, well wrapped up, insisted upon marshalling their long-absent nephew about the grounds to see the improvements. On returning through the gardens, they were met by the head-gardener, who stopped touching his hat.

'Beg your pardons, ladies, but there's such shocking news.'

'Indeed!' cried Miss Ingestre, looking startled.

'Yes, mum. Mr Twyford, the miller at Roby, was shot dead as he was riding home from Merstoke last night.'

'Shot! Old Mr Twyford shot!'

'What a dreadful thing!' cried Miss Lydia.

'He was coming home along the high-road, it seems, on Gray Dobbin, an old horse as could find the way blindfold. It was a bad night, we know; but through the noise of falling rain, a woman in a cottage heard two shots fired. She ran to the door just in time to see the horse galloping away skinned; so she fetched a lantern, and found Mr Twyford lying in the road. She got help; but the poor old gentleman was dead—shot through the heart.'

'Was he robbed?'

'No, mum. That's the strange part of it; his purse and pocketbook was untouched. There's a regular hue and cry through the county to find the murderer, folks is so sorry. Old Mr Twyford was as well known as Boston Stump.'

'You remember him, dear Mark, do you not?'

'I had forgotten his name; but I recollect going several times with the Vicarage boys to be weighed at the mill. He was a tall man, I think. His wife used to bring us out cowslip wine. There was a daughter too—a young, timid, slip of a girl,' said the Major, turning his thoughts backward.

'Ah! she grew up the beauty of the county. People would ride past the mill to try and get a peep at her. I have seen many beautiful girls, but never one so perfectly lovely as poor Elizabeth.'

'Why do you say poor? Is she dead?'

'She may be; there has been no news of her for some years. Mrs Twyford died, though; and perhaps Elizabeth had too much her own way. She went on a visit, and became acquainted with a showy man who called himself a gentleman. No doubt he was an adventurer, for it was well known the miller's daughter would have a good fortune. He paid his addresses to her;

but Mr Twyford forbade him the house. Sad to say, Elizabeth eloped with him.'

'No doubt the unprincipled man counted on the father's forgiveness, for he doted on his daughter. She might have married well, for all the young men in these parts were in love with her, she was so amiable. Anyhow, the miller defeated him, for he disinherited Elizabeth. It nearly broke his heart, though, for he seemed to become an old man all at once,' said Miss Lydia, taking up the thread of the narrative. 'It was very undutiful of her; but I suppose she was led away by the man's good looks.'

'The old, old story,' remarked Major Randall. 'I wonder how often it has happened, and will happen again.'

'It will be the same as long as there are serpent tongues,' said Miss Ingestre with asperity.

THE LATE EXPEDITION TO LABRADOR.

EARLY in the spring of last year a party of scientists, under the direction of Professor Lee, of Bowdoin College, left the United States for the purpose of exploring the interior of Labrador, and to study the geology of that interesting region, after the example of Professor Hind, who geologically 'did' a large part of that peninsula some years ago. Lost to sight for many months, and without even the pen of a newspaper reporter, the scientists seem to have passed through many exciting experiences and some trials. They have just returned to the haunts of civilisation again, bringing with them rich stores of new information pertaining to the geology of sterile Labrador, which is therefore no longer to be considered the *terra incognita* it has hitherto been, and which, strange to say, its neighbour, Newfoundland, is even at the present moment. In addition to other matters of interest, Professor Lee's party claim to have made two discoveries, which are not discoveries at all in the commonly accepted sense of that term. There is first the waterfall which the travellers found somewhere not far removed from Ungava, and which they represent to be a far bigger thing in all respects, as we have no doubt it is, than Niagara. It is unquestionably a matter for gratulation to have looked on this magnificent cataract, and to be the first to give to the world some idea of its vast proportions; but its existence has been known of for years past, though not perhaps by many outside of Labrador itself. Falling in with a party of Indians some eight years ago, while cruising on the coast of Labrador, we heard about it from them, though they could give us no idea of its size save that which 'big' would convey to our minds. Later, it formed the subject of a very interesting conversation between ourselves and an agent of the Hudson's Bay Company who had been living on the coast for more than seventeen years. He had not seen the cataract, but had frequently heard of it from the Indian trappers in the company's service.

Again: a correspondent of the *Graphic*, of October 3d, credits the members of the Lee expedition with the noteworthy achievement of

discovering, amid the wilds and solitudes of Labrador, a tribe of Indians of whose existence even ethnologists have hitherto possessed no knowledge. If this be so, the fact is of great interest, though we are convinced that these supposed unidentified red men can be no other than a remnant of the once powerful and numerous Beothic tribe, the aborigines of Newfoundland, who were driven from their own country by the malevolence and wanton cruelty of the early settlers from Britain, and the jealous Mic-Macs from Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia. The following facts give considerable colour to our conjecture. A tradition still lingers among the settlers of Northern Newfoundland, with whom we lived for some years, that the last of the Beothics, a mere handful, passed across the Strait of Belle Isle in two canoes early in the present century, and having landed somewhere on the south coast of Labrador, had disappeared. This tradition is materially strengthened by the testimony of the late Dr Mulock, Roman Catholic Bishop of St John's, Newfoundland. He says: 'I have slight reason to think that a remnant of these people [the Beothics] survive in the interior of Labrador. A person told me there some time ago that a party of Montagnais Indians saw at some distance—about fifty miles from the sea-coast—a party of strange Indians, clothed in long robes, or cassocks of skins, who fled from them. They lost sight of them in a little time; but on coming up to their tracks, they were surprised to see the length of their strides, which proved them to be of a large race, and neither Mic-Mac, Montagnais, nor Eskimos. I believe,' he concludes, 'that these were the remains of the Beothic nation; and as they never saw either a white or red man but as enemies, it is not to be wondered at that they fled. Such is the only trace I can find of the Beothics.'

Early in the present century, but a short time before their supposed extinction, a few individuals of the Beothic tribe were captured by explorers in the Exploits River regions in Newfoundland and taken to the capital. But after spending a few months there, they either returned to their tribe or died of consumption. About that time, too, several proclamations were issued by the British Government to restrain the barbarity of the settlers towards the Beothics. The earliest official notice of the aborigines is in the form of a proclamation by the governor bearing date of 1760. This proclamation seems to have been repeated on the accession of each new governor. The document sets forth that His Majesty had been informed that his subjects in 'Newfoundland do treat the savages with the greatest inhumanity, and frequently destroy them without the least provocation or remorse. In order, therefore, to put a stop to such inhuman barbarity, and that the perpetrators of such atrocious crimes might be brought to due punishment, His Majesty enjoined and required all his subjects to live in unity and brotherly kindness with the native savages; and further enjoined all magistrates to 'apprehend persons guilty of murdering the native Indians and send them to England for trial.' Owing to the scattered nature of the settlements and the lawless habits of the early trappers and fishermen, these proclamations were systematically disregarded. But

a short time after, the only traces that were visible in their native country of the unfortunate Beothics were a few grassy mounds, decaying deer-fences, and ruined wigwams.

A MESSAGE FROM THE FLOOD.

It was a curious sight to Portside eyes, such a sight, as the younger generation had never seen before. Three miles below lay Portside itself, the cathedral tower looming misty through the hazy January afternoon, while black cold night crept up from the stern frosty east. For five weeks the earth had lain under a canopy of snow; for five weeks work had been at a standstill; and now the river Swirle had frozen over, and for three miles a solid sheet of ice stretched away, and the ring of steel blades echoed in the bare woods. For thirty-seven years the Swirle had defied the grip of King Frost, and even in the terrible winter of 1854 there had only been some few hundred yards of firm ice; whilst now the river seemed to be frozen solid. Where the current ran a little more freely, the ice had been tested at fourteen inches, so that the thousands of skaters passed over the swift flood in perfect safety. The darkness commenced to fall, and the moon grew brighter in the clear sky, while on either bank, lights began to flash in the windows of the cloth-mills along the valley; there was some little work in progress, though even the vale folks were feeling the terrible weather. For ten miles the Swirle Valley was a curious mixture of town and country, rural enough but for the clusters of workmen's cottages, and the smoke from tall chimneys drifting over the cornfields.

Watching the skaters, now fast disappearing in the misty gloom, like jovial demons skimming noiselessly along the frozen stretch, were two countrymen, Swirle Valley men, as their slow speech and broad keen faces denoted. They were both comfortably clad, and each after the manner of his kind smoked his pipe with the solid grave silence often observed between old friends, when lack of speech does not necessarily mean embarrassment from lack of ideas.

'I mind no such sight as this, and, man and boy, I've worked in Swirle Valley for nigh on fifty year,' remarked the elder at length. 'Fifty-four was pretty hard, but then the ice only bore from Portside Stone Bridge up to the old boat-house. That was half a mile as near as no matter. And when the flood came down, it carried part of the bridge away. A sudden thaw now, with all that snow on the hills, would sweep all the bridges away as if they were made of card-board.'

Jacob Strahan nodded solemnly. All the cottages and the mills whereat Jacob and his companion, Benjamin Attwood, acted as foremen, were situated far above range of any flood, and the notion of disaster for those below was not without a comfortable sense of personal satisfaction.

'I went up last week as far as Maindee,' Strahan replied deliberately; 'and there's ice, ice, nothing but ice, 'ceptin' on the streams, for close on thirty mile. If Portside Stone Bridge should stand the break-up, there'll be a flood along the upper valley such as no man ever see before.'

'Like the one I mind my grandfather speak of in '97,' said Attwood. 'The ice formed a dam at Portside, and the water burst the embankment at Wareham close by Foljambe's mill, and made a new course down the valley. Right behind us it ran in a stream bigger'n the Swirle is now, as you can see by looking behind you at these ruined cottages.'

The speaker indicated the course of the disastrous flood, the memory of which still lives in the Portside district. A few hundred yards above them the Swirle turned suddenly to the right, the bank being strengthened artificially; and below this bank was a broad ravine, running for some miles in the direction of Portside, the roadway from that place to Maindee traversing the gorge half-way up its side. It was a wild and desolate spot, filled with bracken and brambles and large boulder-stones washed up by that terrible flood; while at the head of it stood Foljambe's factory, almost within rifle-shot of the house of the great manufacturer in question. Very few people passed that way at night, since it was a place of evil repute, though Attwood traversed it frequently, as the ravine was a short-cut from the factory to his own house on the other side of the dip.

'We should be safe enough, if anything was to happen,' Strahan remarked with the same comfortable assurance. 'I never liked that valley, Ben, especially this time of year when the snow lies so deep in places. I don't know why I should think so, but I feel main certain that when the frost goes, we shall find your old master somewhere in the ravine.'

'I wish we could find him,' Attwood replied with an impatient sigh. 'He left my house that night just as it was coming on thick, and laughed at me when I warned him against crossing the gorge. When morning came, he was nowhere to be found, and the snow lying twenty feet deep in some places down there. And when he is found, my George's name will be cleared.'

'Let's hope so,' Strahan replied more cheerfully. 'He's a good lad; and though appearances are against him, I firmly believe he'll come out right yet.—And now, unless we're going to stay here all night, it's time to think about a cup of tea. Another hard frost, I see.'

The two old men turned away together, parting finally on the brow of the hill. With the confidence of one who knows his locality, Attwood crossed the ravine, and slowly climbed upwards to the summit, where the cheerful lights shone out from his own comfortable cottage. A weird feeling came upon him as he carefully skirted the great heaps of snow, below one of which, for all he knew, lay the body of his missing employer, Godfrey Foljambe, concerning whose disappearance every Portside individual was still talking, though the mysterious event was five weeks old.

If there was trouble at the great house on the hill, there were equally sore hearts in the foreman's more humble abode. The missing manufacturer was a just and kind employer, with a keen eye for merit; and that keen eye had looked favourably upon young George Attwood, with the result that six years with Foljambe & Co. saw him cashier to the firm. At this time, however, certain strange defalcations had taken

place; there had been a series of investigations, with the result that the younger Attwood had lost his situation. It was a keen blow to employer and employed alike; but the evidence was terribly clear, and the manufacturer had no alternative, though he declined to prosecute.

So things had drifted on till the night before the great snow, when Mr Foljambe had presented himself at Attwood's cottage in a state of great excitement. George was away from home; hearing which, his late employer refused to disclose his business, contenting himself with leaving a message for his quondam cashier to call upon him on urgent business the following morning. It was dark, with a heavy snow falling, as he departed homewards, laughing to scorn the advice tendered by his foreman as to avoiding the treacherous ravine. By morning the snow lay to the depth of three feet; while, in the gorge below, the white wrack had drifted into huge banks and valleys till even the ruined cottages had disappeared. But worst of all, Mr Foljambe was missing. The last person to see him was George Attwood, who, returning home along the road, was cheerfully accosted by his late employer with the information that good news awaited him on the morrow, with which he plunged into the darkness, to be seen no more of men.

'A bitter night,' Attwood cried, as he stamped across the flagged kitchen and warmed his numbed hands at the grateful blaze. 'A night as makes us thankful to know as we've a roof over our heads.—Come, lass, let us have some tea, for I've been standing by the mere till I'm nigh frozen.'

An extremely pretty girl, seated knitting in the ingle nook, rose from her seat and placed a metal teapot on the white tablecloth. Rose Attwood was, after George, the apple of her father's eye—a cottage Venus, clear-eyed and ruddy of complexion, as most of the hands in the valley knew, to the confusion of their peace of mind. But Rose was no coquette; and, moreover, the handsome, taciturn head-clerk at Foljambe's appeared to have monopolised the belle of the district, though, be it said, the course of true love had not hitherto run with the smoothness Rupert Vaughan could have wished.

He rose up from the other side of the fireplace, where he had been contemplating Rose in his usually moody fashion, and joined the party at their evening meal. Latterly, his presence seemed to be an understood thing, though a grim watchful silence, his natural manner, seemed to check all attempts at cheerfulness. Who he was and whence he came were mysteries to the Swirle Valley people, who resented his cool dogged appropriation of the prettiest and most popular of their maidens.

It was a more than usually silent party as George Attwood sat moodily in the most secluded corner, and Vaughan was more watchful and cat-like than usual. Rose, demurely knitting, listened to her father's well-meant attempts at conversation, interpolating a few remarks now and then.

'Heard nothing of Mr Foljambe, I suppose?' He addressed Vaughan. 'I hear that the *Port-side Chronicle* says something about foul-play.'

'Just like those newspaper fellows,' Vaughan

sneered. 'Never mind what lies you invent so long as you sell your papers, is their motto.'

George Attwood looked up with sudden interest, and with far more attention than he had hitherto paid to the desultory conversation. 'I don't know so much about that,' said he. 'The night before Mr Foljambe disappeared, he came here specially to see me. And what did he tell me when I met him afterwards? That he had some good news for me in the morning; and the only good news I could hear was that my name was cleared. Suppose the real culprit had discovered that his crime had come out, and followed my employer across the ravine. He was an old man and feeble. I don't suggest anything, but the task would have been easy.'

'Why not have done it yourself?' Vaughan returned, with a deeper scowl. 'You were the last man, on your own confession, who saw him alive; you met him in a lonely spot; and, for all we know to the contrary, he might have come here that night with fresh proofs against you. Goodness knows, I believe you innocent; but the theory of foul-play is a dangerous one—for you.'

'How rapidly you draw your deductions,' George replied, striving in vain to speak calmly. 'It would be equally sensible to point to you as the murderer. You have the place I held, the place you coveted. Before Smithson went to America, you and he laid your heads together to convict me. By some means or other, Mr Foljambe discovers the truth, and, by some means also, you know that he has done so. Then you follow him, and— Well, the rest is easy. Circumstances soon multiply themselves, suspicion once aroused. Here is one ready made: Why did you miss coming here for the first time in three months on the very night that my late employer had disappeared?'

'This is a poor jest,' Vaughan said hoarsely. 'I did come.'

'Yes, close on eleven o'clock. Still, I do but jest, though you take it so seriously. Still, you insulted me first, and—'

With an authoritative wave of his pipe-stem, Benjamin Attwood put an end to the argument. 'It is a sore subject, and gains nothing by discussion,' he observed sententiously. 'You are both talking nonsense, and dangerous nonsense, too. Change the subject.'

But with this expiring effort, the flickering conversation went out altogether. Vaughan rose, and taking up his hat, wished his friends an early good-night as he passed out. Rose rising to open the door for his departure. In his own masterly way he took her by the shoulder and led her out into the moonlight. 'You will forget all that,' he said fiercely. 'This pain I get at my heart makes me almost mad at times.—Rose, how much longer are you going to keep me waiting?' He bent down as if to kiss her; but the girl drew hastily away. A thin haze crossed the moon, and a puff of wind from the west brushed her cheek. It was as well that she did not see the lurid light in her companion's eyes.

'Very well,' he said. 'Good-night; and remember that the time will come when I shall make you love me.'

Rose felt an almost wild sense of relief as her

impetuous lover disappeared. She did not care for him; her heart told her that, though she shrank from giving pain by a direct refusal. She lingered a moment in the open, conscious of a milder breath in the air, and listening to the sigh of the wind in the woods. Presently, as the clouds seemed to thicken, she felt the rain-spray on her cheeks.

'There is heavy weather on the hills,' Attwood said, as he drew his chair nearer to the wood-fire. 'I thought it seemed warmer.—Bless me, is that rain?' A burst of wind dashed the sheeted water against the casement, and caused the feathery ashes to dance and swirl on the hearthstone. 'A sudden change,' the old man continued. 'There will be no skating on the Swirle to-morrow. A night of rain with all this snow, and before morning we shall see a flood the like of which Portside people have never witnessed before.'

As the cottage lay still and silent, with the heavy downpour roaring on the roof, the groaning and creaking ice on the river rose higher and higher. Morning was still struggling with night as a crash louder than the rest roused Benjamin Attwood, who hastily assumed his clothes, and wrapping himself in a heavy mackintosh, walked towards the river. The vast sheet of ice like a thing of life trembled and vibrated, and then, with a report like the roar of artillery, broke into a million pieces. Suddenly released, the rushing flood-water rose with marvellous speed, creeping up the banks, till within the hour the erstwhile solid plain was a creamy seething mass of green foam and floating ice-floes.

'Eight feet in an hour,' exclaimed Strahan, who had also come out to watch the wonderful sight, 'and thirty miles of ice to come down yet. No chance of that getting through the Portside Stone Bridge. What with the rain in the night and the snow on the Black Mountains, there'll be twenty feet of flood-water, not reckoning the ice at all.'

As the day went on, it seemed probable that Strahan's prophecy would be fulfilled. With alarming rapidity it rose, bearing great fields of ice, until, almost imperceptibly at first, the current began to slacken, while the water itself rose with still more alarming rapidity. The most sinister prophecies had been fulfilled, and the ice had jammed about Portside Bridge.

Along the embankment by Foljambe's factory the immense mass began to collect, pressing in an inclined plane against the bank, over which presently the water commenced to flow into the ravine below. Almost instantly the serried masses moved with irresistible force against the crumbling embankment; and before the astonished eyes of the spectators, it seemed to meet and disappear as, a few moments later, the swollen waters of the Swirle were thundering down the new channel of the ravine.

'Thank Heaven there are no houses there!' Attwood said fervently, his voice utterly drowned in the fearsome din. 'The flood will just waste itself on the broad meadows below Portside without doing much harm. Surely it is a wonderful sight, if a terrible one.'

The sullen waters rolled away, and by the end of three days a few huge boulders and uprooted

trees only remained as evidence of the great flood. The sandy floor of the ravine was firm and hard when Attwood and Strahan, under the direction of Frank Foljambe, commenced to thoroughly search that wave-washed region for the missing manufacturer. The whole face of the gorge was changed; the brambles and bracken had disappeared; while the huge rocky boulders alone remained. The great stones were piled up in fantastic confusion, forming pyramids and caverns into which half-a-dozen men could creep. Vaughan, looking moodily on at the work, seemed uneasy as Strahan turned over the sand under an overhanging rock where some soft substance occupied his attention.

'Why waste your time?' he asked impatiently. 'I tell you there is nothing here.'

Strahan did not reply, as he hurriedly scraped the sand away under the ledge with his spade. There was something yielding there—a scrap of sodden cloth, the toe of a boot, and presently the cold clammy semblance of a human hand came in view. An exclamation of horror and surprise broke from him, hearing which, the rest of the search-party turned to the spot, and carefully assisted the old man in his melancholy task.

The corpse was that of Mr Foljambe, without a doubt. Preserved by the frost and snow, and protected from the violence of the beating waters by the great rock, the body was singularly free from marks of violence, save that there was a livid mark on the neck, and the hands were clenched as if in a convulsion of pain.

'There has been something more than misadventure here,' the dead man's son said with a shuddering respiration. 'And I thought my father was without an enemy in the world.—See, some of you, what is clasped in the right hand, for I dare not look.'

With some difficulty, Attwood opened the stiff fingers, and drew from their clasp a fragment of torn silk. The pattern was dull and faded, but as the searcher laid it on his open palm, he gave a cry of astonishment.

'Great heavens, this is Vaughan's!' he cried. 'He was wearing a scarf of similar pattern when he came to my house on the evening of my poor master's disappearance. It was all pulled-up and disarranged, and Vaughan was always ridiculously neat in his dress. I remember Rose asking him how it happened, and he made some excuse, I forget what.'

All eyes were turned in search of Vaughan, but he had disappeared. There was an ominous silence as the little group bore the body away up to the great house on the hill, where they found the police inspector for the district waiting to hear the result of their search. Another body had been found far down the ravine, and the police had come over for the sake of identification. With a curt gesture of dismissal, the inspector signified that he would be alone with Mr Foljambe, and with a few stern words as to the necessity of perfect silence, the searchers gradually dispersed.

The afternoon wore on slowly, and the factory clock gave out the hour of three before Rupert Vaughan found himself standing in Mr Frank Foljambe's office, confronting that gentleman, who was supported by the police inspector and the two Attwoods. There was, despite the young

employer's marked distress, a stern expression of features, which seemed to paralyse the new-comer's faculties, and to set his heart beating with alarming palpitations.

'I have sent for you,' Foljambe said distinctly, 'on a very painful errand. You are aware perhaps that the body of my unhappy father has been found. That he died by violence there is no possible reason to doubt. We are not without a clue to the murderer, since, in the right hand of the body, we found a fragment of a scarf which has been identified as yours.'

Vaughan suddenly raised his hand to his throat with a choking cry.

'We have discovered in your rooms the missing article to which the torn fragment fits exactly. In my father's pocket-book we have also discovered a letter from America, in the handwriting of your accomplice Smithson, in which he confesses the plot between you, whereby your defalcations and robberies were artfully traced to young Mr Attwood. This information he was probably conveying to the injured young man, who, unfortunately, was not at home, when he met you in the ravine or near it and taxed you with your crime. The letter from America only arrived by the afternoon post, or probably you might have heard of it earlier. We do not ask you to say anything in reply, only I thought it right that you should know of what you are accused.'

'And of what am I accused?' Vaughan asked unsteadily.

'Of the murder of Mr Foljambe on the night of December 28th last,' the inspector put in quietly. 'You will consider yourself my prisoner.'

Vaughan bowed helplessly; he saw no hope in the ring of faces, felt no consciousness save the fluttering pain at his heart. A strange sensation of coming death was strong upon him; he knew too well the terrible consequences to a hopelessly diseased heart likely to arise from the excitement of such a moment. 'I did it,' he said in a faint low voice—'yes, I killed him. I followed him up to Attwood's house, and directly I heard him speak, I knew what he had heard. But I did not care for myself. I might have been beyond arrest before morning, had it not been for my love for that old man's daughter. I am half a Spaniard, and only they know what love means. Blind and mad, I followed my employer. I heard his conversation with George Attwood; and I—I killed him. I strangled him in the ravine, and hid the body under a great flat stone, piling others upon it till the snow drove me away. I dared not keep away from Attwood's, though I had forgotten my torn scarf, which has betrayed me. I did not intend to wrong George here; but we—Smithson and I—had been speculating, and some one had to suffer. —Bah! you are wondering why I am so foolish as to make such a full confession. I know, because'— He paused, as a horrible pain, keen as a knife, shot through his heart. Presently, with white ashy face and pallid lips, he continued painfully: 'I am not afraid. I shall never leave this room alive. I have been solemnly warned against any sudden shock, and this has overpowered me. I killed Foljambe; ay, I would have killed him twenty times, and suffered all the agony I have gone through a

hundred times, rather than lose the love on which I had set my life. And when you think you have me in your grasp I cheat you—thus.' With a gesture of despair and defiance, he threw up his hands, falling prostrate upon the floor with a resounding crash.

Forgetful of his wrongs, Benjamin Attwood raised the motionless form, so still and silent. 'He has fainted,' he said. 'The excitement has been too much.'

'He is dead,' said the inspector solemnly, as he laid his hand upon the pulseless wrist. 'The prisoner has gone before a higher tribunal than ours.'

There is a new partner in the house of Foljambe & Co. now, whose name is Attwood; and a new resident in the great house on the hill, whose name is Rose. Society and her equals were disposed at first to envy the social promotion of the valley beauty; but as she bears her honours so meekly and sweetly, the sore feeling is rapidly subsiding. But however long they remain there, four actors in the drama are never likely to forget the great flood and its dramatic sequel. For had it not been so ordained, the secret of Godfrey Foljambe's disappearance might have remained a mystery to the end of time.

THE MAY QUEEN.

THE boughs were white with the bloom of May,
And the wild bees were astir,
And sitting about the livelong day
In their vests of golden fur,
And the swallows were circling far above
The meadows fresh and green,
When I ventured first to tell my love
To a blushing, fair, young queen.

And never a royal dame, I'd say,
Had a crown one-half so fair
As the flowery wreath that lightly lay
On her wealth of golden hair.
And her cheeks were red as a rose in June,
And her radiant, smiling eyes
Had the hue we see some summer noon
In the far, blue, gleaming skies.

And the linnet's notes with the woodlark's rang,
And the blackbirds answered keen,
And the village lads and lasses sang
As they danced around their queen;
And I joined their sports and shared their fun
The length of that summer day
Round the tall May-pole, and wooed and won
The maid that was queen of May.

I know that her hair is silvered now
By many a winter's snow,
There are lines of care on her once smooth brow,
And her cheeks have lost their glow;
But to me she is still as fair and young
As she was that summer day
When I told my love with faltering tongue
To the maid that was queen of May.

M. ROCK.

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